Written Submission by Julimar Conservation & Forest Alliance in support of:

Petition No. 120
Julimar State Forest Becoming a National Park

Julimar Conservation & Forest Alliance

Working to ensure the conservation of Julimar State Forest for all to enjoy for years to come.

WE PROPOSE THAT THE ENTIRE 28,600 HA OF JULIMAR STATE FOREST BE GIVEN THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL PARK STATUS.

The Julimar State Forest has an area of 28,600 ha, approximately 15 times the land area of Rottnest Island. The Forest is situated mainly on the Northern side of Julimar Road in the Shire of Toodyay, WA. It is 20 km west of Toodyay and 80 km north-east of Perth.

FOR OVER 40 YEARS, NATIONAL & STATE GOVERNMENTS HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED THE CONSERVATION VALUE OF JULIMAR STATE FOREST, BUT NO FORMAL PROTECTION HAS BEEN GRANTED.

In 1980, Julimar State Forest was added to the *Register of the National Estate* and in 1983 CALM proposed it be made a Regional Park. In 2000 all major parties in both houses of the WA parliament supported its conservation. The Forest has been nominated for Conservation Park Status in two 20-year Regional Forest Agreements between the Commonwealth and State Governments and is nominated for protection in four WA Forest Management Plans.

NATIONAL PARK STATUS WILL PROTECT THE INTEGRITY OF A SIZEABLE AREA OF RICH BIODIVERSITY.

The Leeuwin Group of scientists consider Jarrah forests such as Julimar State Forest to have the greatest biodiversity of any temperate forests in the world.

The 28,600 ha of Julimar State Forest borders with 20,200 ha of woodland which forms the Bindoon Training Area, providing fauna access to 48,800 ha of forest. The high biodiversity value of Julimar Forest is recognised by:

- The north-eastern section is part of the 'Eucalypt Woodlands of the Western Australian Wheatbelt,' a nationally protected ecological community.
- This area is at the intersection of 3 IBRA regions, resulting in a great diversity of flora and fauna.
- In the Forest, complex landform systems give rise to diverse vegetation and habitat, contributing to its well-established resilience.
- The Forest has a wide range of vegetation, from open woodlands to thickets of undergrowth.
- There are 5 major vegetation complexes in the Forest, of which all are tree-dominated. At least 7 Eucalypt species are found there.
- Excluding the Kingdom Fungus, there are over 500 native plant species, representing 60 families and 191 genera.
- There are 4 endangered, 1 vulnerable, and 22 Priority Flora species in the Forest. Over 30 orchids from 14 genera have been identified.
- The Forest is considered by Birdlife Australia to be one of 74 locations in WA of 'global significance for bird conservation' with 121 species of birds recorded -12 of the 18 species being endemic to WA.
- Eight WA species of bats live in the Forest.
- Nine of DBCA's list of 14 threatened species protected by Western Shield live in the Forest.
- Over 40 species of mammals have been found in the area.
- There are 8 known families of Reptiles and 3 families of Amphibians. The Forest has 34 genera and 60 species of Herpetofauna.

NATIONAL PARK STATUS WILL PROTECT CRITICAL HABITAT FOR DBCA LISTED THREATENED & PRIORITY SPECIES.

In addition to being one of the largest breeding sites in WA for Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos, Julimar State Forest is also critical habitat for numerous threatened fauna species including one of the highest recorded populations of Chuditch and one of the few remaining wild populations of the critically endangered Woylie. At least 23 plant species and 2 reptile species are also listed for protection.

Some of the threatened species recorded include:

- **Birds:** Baudin's Black Cockatoo *(Zanda baudinii)*, Carnaby's Black Cockatoo *(Zanda latirostris),* Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo *(Calyptorhynchus banksii naso),* Peregrine Falcon *(Falco peregrinus),* Australian Masked Owl *(Tyto novaehollandiae).*
- **Mammals:** Woylie (Bettongia pencillata), Chuditch (Dasyurus geoffroii), Brush–tailed phascogale (*Phascogale tapoata*). Quenda (*Isoodon obesulus*), Tammar wallaby (*Macropus eugenii*), Western brush wallaby (*Macropus irma*).
- **Reptiles:** Woma Python or Sand python, (*Aspidites ramsayi subsp southwest subpop);* and the Darling Range South-west Ctenotus, *(Ctenotus delli).*
- **Plants:** Chittering Myrtle, (*Hypocalymma sylvestre*); Star Orchid, (*Thelymitra stellata*); *Grevillea bracteosa subsp. Bracteosa*; and *Grevillea curviloba*.

NATIONAL PARK STATUS IS THE STRONGEST DEFENCE TO PROTECT JULIMAR STATE FOREST AT A TIME OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

Rise in temperatures, altered rain patterns, bushfire frequency and intensity, increase in pests and diseases, shifts in growing seasons, loss of biodiversity, and disruption of ecosystem services are all impacts of climate change on WA forests already seen today.

As a result of evapotranspiration, forests moderate weather and cool the surrounding area. As major carbon sinks, forests play a crucial role in combatting climate change. By destroying or damaging Julimar State Forest, a crucial mechanism is removed for storing carbon in the future.

Protecting the integrity of wildlife corridors is crucial due to the threats of climate change. Fragmentation of habitats isolates populations and renders them unviable thereby exacerbating our extinction crisis. Migration is likely to be the most effective mechanism most species can employ to adapt to a rapidly changing environment.

Fauna are adapting by shifting their feeding and breeding grounds. As the local climate changes, terrestrial vertebrates in WA are expected to migrate in a south-westerly direction. Flora whose seeds are transported by forest mammals, birds or wind over rather long distances, also rely on linked corridors for the best chance of species survival. It is vital that we provide large, linked areas of natural bush to enable this to occur.

Via a 5 km corridor of extensive bushland and farmland, Julimar State Forest provides a link between Bindoon Training Area and Moondyne Nature Reserve and Avon Valley National Park. Paruna Wildlife Sanctuary then connects the Avon River National Park to Walyunga National Park, thereby bringing the combined total to 68,300 ha of protected area.

The Forest must be protected from climate change impacts through targeted conservation efforts, protecting its existing size and integrity and employing rigorous, science-based management alongside the established practices of the Traditional Owners.

MATURE ECOSYSTEMS LIKE THOSE FOUND IN JULIMAR STATE FOREST CAN NOT BE REPLACED BY REVEGETATION OFFSET PROGRAMS.

As future mining threats loom over Julimar State Forest, revegetation offsets cannot compensate for the removal or decimation of old-growth trees. Old-growth trees provide vital habitat for wildlife such as black cockatoos as well as storing carbon for longer and more securely compared to logged and plantation forests. Eucalyptus forests are the most carbon-dense in the world.

Ecosystems are dependent on existing geodiversity, soil composition and structure, the diversity of fungi, flora and fauna and the resulting forest microclimates. These ecosystems are the outcome of complex and evolving interdependencies of thousands of species of organisms. Once destroyed, these ecosystems cannot be replicated by revegetation offsets.

NATIONAL PARK PROTECTION OF JULIMAR STATE FOREST IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE TO OUR WELLBEING.

For Aboriginal people, connection to Country is, and always has been, vital and central to their wellbeing. In an increasingly complex world, connection to nature for all of us is more important than ever.

Access to biodiverse natural environments has demonstrated benefits for our mental, physical and spiritual health and wellbeing.

With its proximity to the Perth Metropolitan Area, the Forest has untapped potential as a tourism destination and social asset. The increasing urbanisation of the area surrounding Perth and the growing population in the metropolitan area make the preservation of such forests an urgent priority.

National Park Status would ensure that access for people is managed in ways that are compatible with the conservation agenda, ensuring recreational activities that do not significantly affect environmental and cultural values.

DESIGNATING JULIMAR STATE FOREST AS A NATIONAL PARK WILL ENSURE APPROPRIATE MANAGEMENT PLANNING IS UNDERTAKEN IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LOCAL NOONGAR COMMUNITY.

The Avon River and its tributaries, including the Julimar and Toodyay Brooks are considered to be sites of cultural significance. Conventional wisdom considers Toodyay to be a traditional meeting place for Yued, Whadjuk and Ballardong peoples.

According to procedures outlined in the WA Forest Management Plan 2024-2033, this would include careful consideration of the threats to the Forest and facilitate the responsible culturally and ecologically appropriate access and use of the Forest by WA residents and visitors.

NATIONAL PARK STATUS WILL ENSURE THE PROTECTION OF JULIMAR STATE FOREST WATERWAYS.

Julimar State Forest is well served by a network of ephemeral brooks that provide very localised conditions influencing the development of flora and fauna in areas of the Forest, contributing to the biodiversity.

Whilst the flow of water from the Forest is ephemeral, the quality of that water is fresh, making Julimar Brook, in particular, an important contributor to the Swan-Avon River system.

Small changes in vegetation cover could significantly change the quality of water flowing from the Forest into the Swan-Avon River. If the brooks are polluted, the Swan River will be polluted. National Park status will ensure the quality of waterways will stay intact.

NATIONAL PARK STATUS WILL ENSURE APPROPRIATE MANAGEMENT OF MULTIPLE THREATS.

Julimar State Forest needs the environmental protections given to National Parks to withstand multiple threats including mining, feral animals, fire, uncontrolled use of off-road vehicles and the potential spread of *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (dieback).

It is unclear whether there is dieback in the Forest, but most of the Forest is believed to be clear of this plant pathogen.

There is no active management of the population of feral pigs in Julimar State Forest. It is also home to feral foxes and cats. DBCA's *Western Shield* program could minimise fox numbers through 1080 baiting and reduce feral cat populations through *Eradicat* and *Felixer*. However, only quarterly fox baiting is conducted in the Forest, with no plans to introduce cat control. Instead, the Forest is used as a 'Reference Site' for DBCA to prove how effective baiting is elsewhere.

With climate change comes more intense and frequent bushfires. However, planned burns are also a threat as the location and timing of these burns in the Forest must consider locations of Chuditch populations and timing of breeding cycles of the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo (at the very least), which currently they do not.

Mining is an imminent threat to Julimar State Forest. The Gonneville Nickel-Copper-Platinum Group Element Project will result in the destruction of vital wildlife corridors connecting the Forest with the Moondyne Nature Reserve, Avon Valley National Park, Walyunga National Park and Paruna Wildlife Sanctuary.

In building the extensive infrastructure for water, power and roads, threatened ecological communities such as endangered banksia woodlands would be cleared, impacting threatened flora and fauna. Major mining operations on the boundary of the Forest present a risk to surrounding ecosystem health through groundwater depletion, toxic dust and the spread of dieback.

To protect the Forest, all applications for clearing permits and exploration licences within the Julimar Forest should be refused. When given National Park status, it should be exempt from mining and all mining tenements be terminated or refused.

There are several inappropriate and illegal activities currently negatively impacting the Forest. These include illegal firewood collection, unfettered access for off-road driving (2WD and 4WD vehicles), illegal, unregulated camping, poaching, dumping of rubbish and littering, illegal activities involving the movement of vehicles and the increased risk of spreading dieback.

The most insidious threat to humanity is the undervaluing of forests. This leads to decisions that ignore the true and enormous value of the ecosystem services provided by forests.

CHANGING THE STATUS TO NATIONAL PARK WILL HELP MEET NATIONAL TARGETS.

Following on from the IUCN World Conservation Conference in 2021, the Australian Government made a commitment to achieve the IUCN target of protecting and conserving 30% of its land by 2030.

Making Julimar Forest a National Park and including it in the National Reserve System would help Australia meet its commitments to the IUCN and the International Convention on Biological Diversity.

In 2022, the federal government announced a zero extinctions target. Priority species include the Chuditch and the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo. As Julimar Forest is one of the largest breeding sites in WA for the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo, it is paramount that it is protected. In 1992, a *Species Recovery Plan* was developed to release 23 Chuditch into Julimar Forest. Today the population looks to be thriving.

Australia has the worst mammal extinction record in the world, losing 38 species of mammals since colonisation, around 87% of which are found nowhere else. Increasing the protection of Julimar Forest will potentially play a crucial role in arresting this alarming decline.

FORESTS BELONG TO US ALL.

Forests are not a commodity to be consumed for the benefit and profit of companies and their shareholders. Forests are a long-term investment in the health and welfare of future generations. Forests are – or should be – forever.

Julimar State Forest needs the protections given to National Parks to conserve the natural environment, protect biodiversity and ecological communities and to withstand the multiple threats currently present.

Comprehensive management planning needs to be undertaken in consultation with the traditional owners, scientists, and the community to protect the cultural and ecological values of the Forest. With National Park status comes the obligation of governments to deliver appropriate management.

Australia is not yet meeting its international commitments in relation to conservation, neither is the WA Government meeting its own commitments to protect its forests. These situations need to be reversed through concrete actions such as designating Julimar State Forest as a National Park.

JULIMAR STATE FOREST URGENTLY NEEDS THE GOVERNMENT TO DELIVER ON ITS 40 YEARS OF COMMITMENTS TO CONSERVE ITS BIODIVERSITY & PROTECT IT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. JULIMAR STATE FOREST NEEDS TO BE DESIGNATED A NATIONAL PARK.